

### ***Program Purpose***

The Passport for Foster Youth Promise program was created in 2007 by the state of Washington to help students from foster care attend and succeed in college. The program is authorized as a six-year pilot. The first year of student awards was 2008-09.

The program provides foster youth with information and assistance in preparing for college, as well as a significant scholarship for postsecondary education. Institutions receive incentive grants that enhance and target their support services to foster youth.

### ***Program Highlights***

- A breakthrough data exchange was developed between the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), and colleges. The data exchange protects student's identities while allowing financial aid and support services to be directed to the students.
- Since 2007, over 1,100 foster youth were eligible for the Passport Scholarship. In 2009, 318 students enrolled in the program. Of the remaining eligible students, 28 students attended an out-of-state college and six enrolled at non-participating colleges and 170 students attended a Washington college without receiving financial aid.
- 49 institutions committed to enhance and target their support services for foster youth.
- About 71 percent of all enrolled foster youth persisted from 2008-09 to 2009-2010. As of fall 2010, more than 250 students are enrolled.
- In partnership with DSHS, the Casey Family Foundation and the College Success Foundation, training events were held across the state for college personnel and foster youth providers.

### ***Effect of proposed cuts***

The Governor's proposed 2011-2013 budget suspends the Passport for Foster Youth Promise Program for new students, while fulfilling commitments to previously served students.

Program suspension would result in:

- Loss of awards to 450 students – further stunting the already low participation and retention rates for college-aged foster care youth.
- Higher reliance on student loans and other forms of financial aid in a time of dwindling resources.
- Loss of momentum for college campuses developing programs to serve the unique needs of students from foster care.
- The College Success Foundation would not receive funding to provide personalized support services to students from foster care.

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